

Appln No. 09/640,963
Amdt date February 13, 2006
Reply to Office action of December 12, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-45 were pending in this application when it was last examined. Claims 21, 27, and 34 have been amended. Claims 43-45 have been canceled. The amendments find full support in the original specification, claims, and drawings. No new matter has been added. In view of the above amendments and remarks that follow, reconsideration, reexamination, and an early indication of allowance of the now pending claims 1-42 are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 stand allowed.

Claims 21, 26-27, 32, and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Laskowski (U.S. Patent No. 5,566,189). Claims 22-25, 28-31, 35-39, and 40-42 are rejected as obvious over Laskowski in view of Li (U.S. Patent No. 6,385,752). Claim 33 is rejected as obvious over Laskowski in view of admitted prior art in the original disclosure. Claims 44-45 are rejected as obvious over Laskowski in view of Abe et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,693,889).

Claim 43 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, independent claims 21, 27, and 34 have been amended to include the limitations of claim 43. Claims 21, 27, and 34 are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 22-26, 28-33, and 35-42 are also in condition for allowance because they depend on an allowable base claim, and for the additional limitations that they contain.

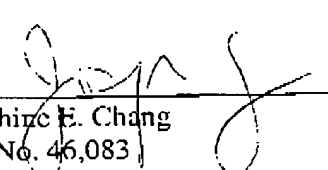
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In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration, reexamination, and an early indication of allowance of the now pending claims 1-42 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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